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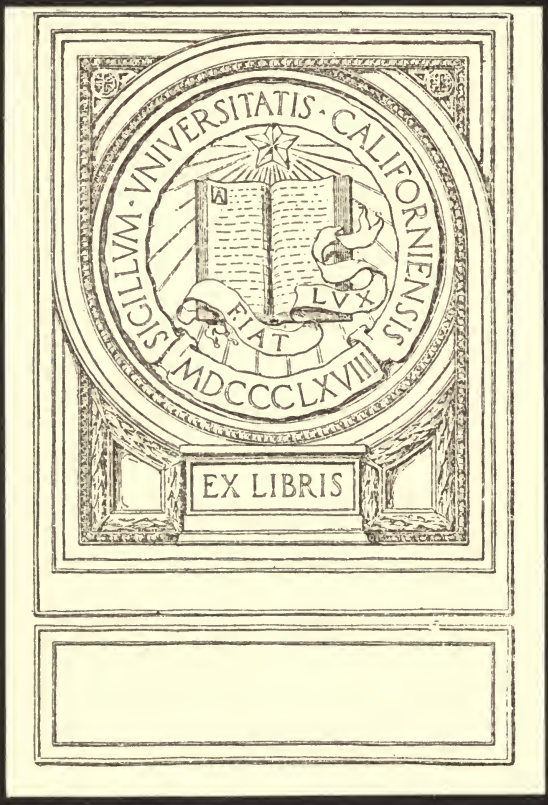
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THE WAR WITH SPAIN.

PROCEEDINGS

OF THE

Chamber of Commerce of the State of New-York.

AT ITS

ONE HUNDRED AND THIRTIETH ANNUAL MEETING,

Held May 5th, 1898.

NEW-YORK:
PRESS OF THE CHAMBER OF COMMERCE.
1898.

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ILLINOIS

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CHAMBER OF COMMERCE OF THE STATE OF NEW-YORK,

AT ITS

ONE HUNDRED AND THIRTIETH ANNUAL MEETING,

Held May 5th, 1898.

Mr. ALEXANDER E. ORR, *President*, in the Chair.

REMARKS OF MR. ORR.

ON calling the Chamber to order, Mr. ORR said :

GENTLEMEN : At our last meeting of a month ago we unanimously endorsed the conservative action of that honored and trusted statesman, the President of the United States, [applause,] who recognized our action through his Secretary by the following letter :

EXECUTIVE MANSION,
Washington, April 9, 1898.

"MY DEAR SIR : The President is in receipt of the telegram of the 7th instant, embodying preamble and resolution recently adopted by the New-York Chamber of Commerce.

"In the President's behalf I beg that you will accept for yourself, and the members of your organization, the assurance of his cordial

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appreciation of this expression of confidence and support, which is very encouraging to him.

Very truly yours,

(Signed,) JOHN ADDISON PORTER,
Secretary to the President."

Mr. ALEXANDER E. ORR,
President Chamber of Commerce,
New-York, N. Y.

[Applause.]

Since then this country has been makimg history at a rapid pace. Commodore DEWEY has a very prominent niche in it, [applause,] and we are brought face to face with the realities, the responsibilities and the sacrifices incident to war.

The question is not now whether our intervention in behalf of Cuba is defensive or aggressive, wise or imprudent, equitable or unjust, for the season of controversy is past, and there can be no backward movement ; [applause ;] but what is incumbent upon us in our associate capacity, from the standpoint of conditions as they exist to-day ?

The records of the Chamber of Commerce contain many instances of patriotic action and loyal expression in times of national anxiety or grave emergency. They also give evidence of abiding confidence in the good sense and good faith of the American people, and a firm belief in the magnificent destiny guaranteed to this country through an inherited birthright so nobly won by the founders of this Republic a little more than a century ago. [Applause.]

The commercial, the financial and the industrial interests of New-York, centred in this Chamber, have been always first in coming to the front, to uphold the hands of constituted authority, to maintain the honor and dignity of the nation and the rights and privileges of American citizenship, and this they stand ever ready to repeat when just occasion demands it. [Applause.]

Many of our older members will recollect the beginning of the Civil War of 1861, and how the patriotic action of this Chamber, in those dark days, was stimulated and guided by the wise counsels of our affectionately remembered associate, A. A. Low. [Applause.]

Bearing this in mind, I have asked his son, our fellow member, the honored President of Columbia University, to prepare resolu-

tions in conformity with our traditional loyalty, which he has kindly done, and, if there is no objection, the general order of business will be suspended for a short time in order that he may present them to you for your approval. [Great applause.]

SPEECH OF THE HON. SETH LOW, PRESIDENT OF COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY.

MR. PRESIDENT AND GENTLEMEN OF THE CHAMBER OF COMMERCE: I feel it a privilege and an honor to present to-day this preamble and these resolutions for the consideration of the Chamber:

Whereas, The people of the United States, by the almost unanimous action of their Government, are at war with Spain for the purpose of securing for the people of Cuba a free and stable government; and

Whereas, Every instinct of humanity and patriotism demands that, in such a controversy, the people sustain the Government with all their power; therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Chamber of Commerce of the State of New-York, mindful of its own loyal and patriotic past, hereby pledges its unqualified and hearty support to the President and Congress of the United States in the conduct of the war. [Applause.]

Resolved, That the Chamber will willingly and heartily bear its share of the common burdens, whatever they may be, to the end that such a peace may speedily be obtained as will enure to the benefit of our Cuban neighbors, and to the domestic quiet and prosperity of the United States. [Applause.]

Resolved, That a Committee of thirty members, of which the President of the Chamber shall be Chairman, be appointed to take such action as may, from time to time, be necessary, in order to give to this action of the Chamber its greatest possible efficiency and value.

Resolved, That the thanks and congratulations of the Chamber be offered to Commodore DEWEY and the gallant officers and crews of the Asiatic squadron, who, by one blow, struck under circumstances of peculiar heroism, have relieved our Pacific coast from fear of attack, freed our merchant ships in the East from dread of capture, and while adding new lustre to the brilliant annals of the

American navy, have helped importantly to shorten the war. [Great applause.]

Mr. President : The record of this Chamber for supporting the Government in times of difficulty and danger is a record of which every member may be justly proud. I am confident that now, no less than on former occasions, this Chamber wishes to do its whole duty as a patriotic and loyal body. It is easy to understand the feeling of dazed surprise which overspread the mercantile and financial community when it found itself suddenly called upon to face the serious embarrassments and possible dangers of a war with a maritime power over a question that had not come very near to its own life. As long as there was a hope of bringing about a permanent settlement of the questions in dispute by peaceful means, it was natural and becoming that the influence of this Chamber should have been thrown strongly into the scale in favor of a solution of the problem by the resources of diplomacy. But, for loyal Americans, the day has gone by for the discussion of that aspect of the trouble, except as an historical question. [Applause.] Our appeal has been taken " to the considerate judgment of mankind ;" and history never renders her verdict until time has illuminated and tested events. In the meanwhile, this, at least, may be said,—that neither the Spanish Premier nor our own President desired war ; and yet, neither of them could avoid war. I have heard it said, nevertheless, in many quarters, that the war is needless, and ought to have been avoided. In the same way it was said to me, not many months ago, that our Civil War was needless, and ought to have been avoided. Statements like these, in view of the event, seem to me to carry but little weight. The fact is that war has not been avoided, and the reason why is not far to seek. Events beyond our control have created in both countries a public feeling which has rendered the people of each country, for the time being, probably incapable of doing full justice to the other. Under these circumstances war has come ; and, in view of these circumstances, it seems to me it may justly be said that war was inevitable. For myself, I believe that history will sustain the attitude taken by the United States. [Applause.] Spain has shown herself a cruel mother to Cuba and a bad neighbor to us, and the most earnest opponent of the war can point to no circumstance in Spain's long dealings with her colonies, to justify a hope that under her dominion the history of Cuba in the future would in any way differ materially from what it has been in the past. I firmly believe, therefore, that the United

States, in this contest, is fighting the battle of humanity and the battle of civilization. And may God speed the right. [Great applause.]

Mr. President, I move the adoption of the resolutions.

REMARKS OF EX-GOVERNOR LEVI P. MORTON.

Mr. President: I only rise to second the motion which has been made for the adoption of the resolutions submitted by President Low, which, I am sure, will meet with the hearty approval of every member of the Chamber of Commerce. [Applause.]

SPEECH OF MR. WILLIAM E. DODGE.

Mr. President: You are good enough to ask me to say a word in support of the resolutions, which have my hearty approval.

At our last meeting we earnestly hoped and believed that the wise, patriotic and statesmanlike action of our President and of his Cabinet might prevent the horrors and evils of war. That hope we have lost and the war is upon us. Providence has worked stronger and faster than we had anticipated, and our duty now is plain and clear. We must support the President in his trying position, and stand behind him with the force of public sentiment, and with all the help and vigor that we can give him.

There are some very peculiar things about this war. Since the Crusades I do not remember a war quite so unique in its character. We have absolutely nothing to gain. It is an unselfish war. We have taken our places in the front rank of civilized nations, and believe that we have a duty, as a part of the police of the world, to keep order and to prevent the cruelties and wickedness which have brought untold sufferings to our nearest neighbors. We have met the responsibility, and the duty is before us. I believe that God, in his goodness, is behind the nation, and agree with President Low, that sad, dark and mysterious as it may seem to us now, history will vindicate our course, and that the progress of the world, and especially of the Western Hemisphere, will be so increased and embraced that we will see by and by its wisdom.

This Chamber has always stood for the firm support of the Government in all times of trial. Through the days of the Revolution and the War of the Rebellion, through all the trials that have come to us, this Chamber has stood firmly and vigorously behind the Government.

Those of us who have read the records of the Chamber of Commerce will be interested to go back and find the hearty sympathies of this people with those European nations who intervened in Greece and secured its independence. All of us who were boys shortly afterwards, remember with what pride we used to repeat at our school exhibitions the poem about MARCO BOZARRIS, and the whole world vindicated the position taken at that time by the Powers who freed Greece.

We were full of indignation a few years ago because the Christian powers of the world did not promptly interfere to prevent the terrible atrocities in Bulgaria, and for the last two or three years our hearts have been harrowed by the fearful cruelties of Turkey in Armenia, and we wondered that the Christian nations of Europe had not interfered. And now that like responsibilities and duties have come to us, and Providence has led us to assume them, we hope and believe that every member of this Chamber, and all the citizens of New-York, will be heartily in favor of strengthening and invigorating every power of the Government, so that it may be a short, sharp and decisive war. [Applause.]

There is one single thing I want to say, if I may be allowed, Mr. President, and that is this: The character of the young men who volunteer in this country is so different from every other country in the world that it gives a very peculiar interest to any movement such as we are confronted with now. They are not the class of men that take the Queen's shilling and fill the ranks of the English army. They are not the class of men who are conscripted in the agricultural regions of France and Germany. They are the very flower of our manhood, the most vigorous, able and best young men in the country, who volunteer and crowd the recruiting offices for the opportunity to bleed and die, if it need be, for their country. The whole community is in sympathy with them. I passed yesterday through a large New-England town where a battery of artillery raised in the town were going to the station to proceed to the camp of instruction. The whole country was out. There must have been ten or twenty thousand people. As far as you could see, in every direction, were men, women and children; mothers with their little children; boys from their schools; and it is so everywhere. The whole country is behind the President at this time, and it argues well for our success.

I think we are going to need some business management and helpfulness. That is one reason why I hope this Chamber will cordially back up the Government. I was crossing Long Island ferry

the other day when regiments were on their way to Hempstead. Of course the regular members of the regiments were in good shape, and had their overcoats and blankets, but there was a very large number of recruits without any blankets and without any overcoats, with their small possessions wrapped up in paper parcels under their arms, and when they got to Hempstead Plains, and found that the Commissary and Quartermaster's departments were behind them and not before them, that they had no straw to sleep upon, hardly tents enough, and only pie for breakfast, I think it shows that we need a little business management to help on this good work. I trust, Mr. President, also, that this Committee, which I know will be appointed with the earnest good will of the Chamber, will do what they can to supplement the kind of work that was done by the Sanitary Commission during the war. We need that kind of cheerful help, and I know that there are men here who will gladly give of money and time and influence in every helpful way to carry it on. I very cordially second this motion. [Applause.]

SPEECH OF THE HON. ABRAM S. HEWITT.

Mr. President and Gentlemen of the Chamber of Commerce: I very cheerfully respond to this unexpected call to second these resolutions, although I cannot hope to add anything to the impressive force with which they were presented by President Low, and have been seconded by Governor Morton and Mr. Dodge. I think, however, that I may contribute one idea to the matter, of some importance. For twenty-five years the Government of the United States and its people have been trying to avoid a war with Spain. In 1873, after the Virginius outrage, there seemed to be no possibility of the avoidance of war, and nothing but the great experience of President Grant and the high statesmanship of Hamilton Fish, enabled us then to compose the issues so that the dread arbitrament of war was avoided. I am satisfied that we made a mistake. It would have been better twenty-five years ago to have settled our differences with Spain. They had forfeited all right to govern Cuba, or any colonial possession. [Applause.] You all recall the manner in which the good old English blood boiled out on the occasion when Captain Lorraine stepped in without orders from his Government, and stopped the further murder of the Virginius prisoners. That spirit has survived to this day. We have not forgotten our English brothers, and they

are not forgetting us in this conflict. [Great applause.] The justification for not resorting to the final issue of arms on that occasion was this. While Spain had forfeited all right to govern Cuba, the Cubans had shown no capacity to govern themselves. To interfere with an existing government without the ability to provide a stable and satisfactory substitute, is a thing which no nation ought ever to assume to do. The United States never desired the possession of Cuba. Its statesmen have always desired to avoid the complications which will come from its annexation to the United States. I know, as I happened then to be a member of the Committee on Foreign Affairs in the subsequent Congress—I know how carefully the question was discussed and considered, and that the solution of the Virginius difficulty was deemed to be the wisest that could have been made at that time, because it relieved us of responsibility for the government of Cuba. The same spirit of consideration for Spain has uniformly prevailed. You remember that President CLEVELAND gave notice, in his last message, that unless something was done to satisfy the public opinion of the people of the United States that a just and stable government would be formed in Cuba, the people of the United States would be compelled to interfere. This notice was renewed by President MCKINLEY in his inaugural address. The trouble has been that Spain has never realized that the people of this country were in earnest. There would have been no war to-day if they could have been made to understand the spirit which animates the people of this country in reference to governmental oppression—a spirit which we have inherited from our revolutionary ancestors. They never could be made to understand that we do not desire to add to our territorial possessions and our responsibilities. Even now every communication which comes from Spain is based upon the idea that this country is trying and has been trying for twenty-five years to acquire Cuba as a part of its domain. There is no way of ever removing this false impression, except when the final victory comes, and the abuses of that obsolete—I was going to say civilization, but I will not degrade the term civilization by the use of that word—that obsolete power have passed away, then they will be made to see that neither the Government of this country nor the people of this country will take advantage of the situation to add one foot of territory to its already ample domain. [Great applause.] Then we shall stand justified before the world. Then the verdict of history, to which President Low has turned with such confidence, will show that not only the President of the United States, but the Congress of the

United States and the people of the United States have had but one object in this great controversy, and that is to see that justice is done, even though the heavens shall fall. [Great applause.]

The President.—I will now put the question upon the resolutions offered by President Low. Those in favor of their adoption will please say aye ; those opposed, no.

The resolutions were declared unanimously adopted.

The following gentlemen were subsequently appointed the Committee authorized by the third resolution :

Alexander E. Orr,
Seth Low,
Levi P. Morton,
J. Pierpont Morgan,
Abram S. Hewitt,
Carl Schurz,
Whitelaw Reid,
John A. Stewart,
Charles S. Fairchild,
William E. Dodge,
John Sloane,
Morris K. Jesup,
Charles S. Smith,
J. Edward Simmons,
Jacob H. Schiff,
John S. Kennedy,
John Claflin,
Richard A. McCurdy,
John A. McCall,
Samuel D. Babcock,
John Crosby Brown,
John Harsen Rhoades,
August Belmont,
William L. Strong,
Thomas T. Eckert,
John D. Rockefeller,
William L. Trenholm,
Henry B. Hyde,
Henry W. Cannon,
Isidor Straus.

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